

THE PINK

Saturday, August 15, 2015

65p

Supporting local sport

Daily Echo

P65p ISSN 0969-56X3

ISSN 0969-56X3

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Published by Newsquest Media (Southern) Ltd and printed at Newsquest (Southern) Ltd, from the offices at Newspaper House, Redbridge, Southampton, SO16 9JX. Telephone 023 8042 4800. Registered at the Post Office as a newspaper. 126th year.



Exclusive Terry Paine column

Read the Saints legend: P11

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Saints run out of Luk

Lukaku scores twice

RONALD Koeman admitted Saints have been given a wake-up call following their 3-0 defeat against Everton.

A Romelu Lukaku brace and another from Ross Barkley condemned Saints to their heaviest home defeat since November 2014, when they were beaten by the same scoreline against Manchester City.

After a 2-2 draw with Newcastle on the opening day of the Premier League season, it leaves Saints hunting for a first top flight victory of the campaign.



Saints players look dejected after Everton's Romelu Lukaku (hidden) scores his sides first goal of the game at St Mary's

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Ronald is frustrated with Saints' set-piece defending

Koeman: This was a wake-up call, we have to defend better

RONALD Koeman admitted Saints have been given a wake-up call following their 3-0 defeat against Everton.

The Saints boss said he was not angry with his team after but certainly appeared disappointed to see them concede via a break from their attacking corner for the second week in a row, *writes Adam Leitch*.

That goal put Saints on the back foot against Everton and things didn't get much better as they ended up following up last week's 2-2 draw at Newcastle with a heavy defeat at St Mary's.

Koeman said: "The set-pieces we gave a lot of attention at set-pieces.

"Normally defensively we are defending very good.

"I think Southampton was last year the best team in the Premier League. I think there was no direct goal about corner kicks against us.

"But you have to know if we have a corner kick we need a good organisation, we need reaction.

"Then we can't let them score the second goal because that's not good."

There were plenty of errors from Saints again, at both ends of the pitch.

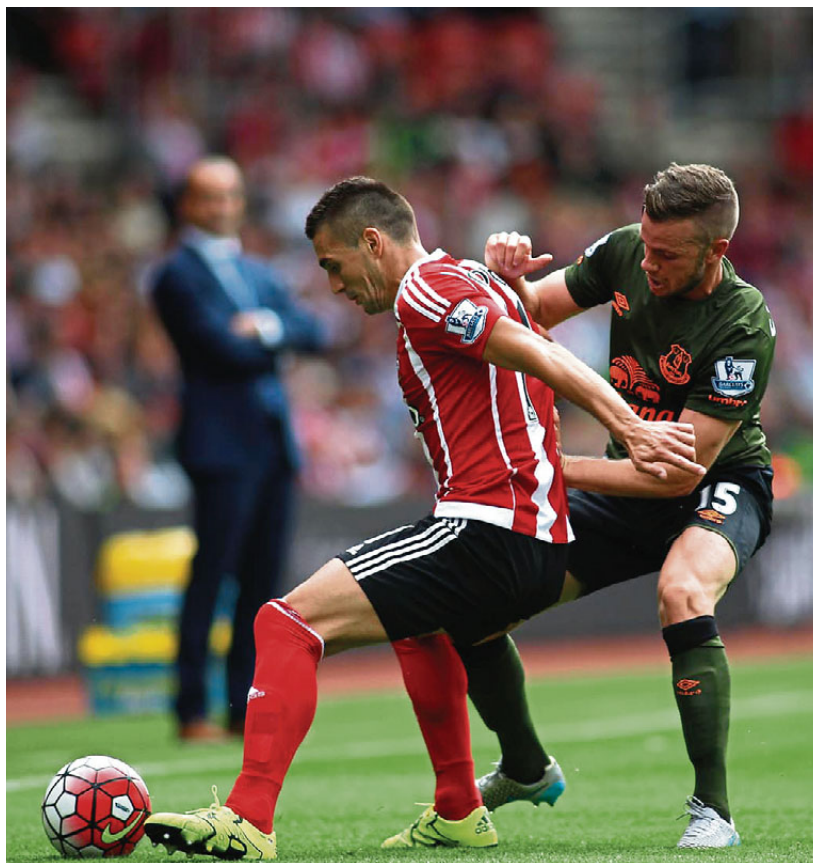
When asked what went wrong against the Toffees, Koeman replied: "Too much, too much in the first half.

"I think we gave them too much space to play, too much space between the lines, and you know if you give Everton that space to play football between the lines then you get difficulties.

"Maybe the best example to tell about what happened in the first half was two times a corner kick and one goal and one chance.

"You can't do that kind of mistakes on this level.

"Already received the goal the 2-1 against Newcastle about an offensive corner kick and today the second goal and then you know it's very difficult to come back in the game."



Saints now move on to prepare for the Europa League tie against FC Midtjylland on Thursday.

The Danish champions travel to St Mary's for the first leg before Saints go looking for a first Premier League win of the campaign at Watford.

They will certainly have to produce an improved performance, and

Koeman has acknowledged that.

"Maybe we need to bring more attention in a better reaction when this happens," said Koeman, referring to those counter attacking goals conceded from set-pieces.

"Normally if the opponent let one player in front we like to have one in his back and one in front of the

player.

"That's small details but very important ones and we have to improve because you can lose and you can win games about set pieces.

"If you don't score in offensive set pieces that we don't receive at least the goal behind. We have to talk about that."

● Read Monday's Daily Echo for more reaction and analysis ahead of the visit of FC Midtjylland on Thursday.



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SAINTS 0 EVERTON 3 (Lukaku 22, 45; Barkley 84)

Saints crash at home to a rampant Everton



Graziano Pelle's body language says it all (Chris Moorhouse)

By Adam Leitch

SAINTS are still searching for their first Premier League win of the season after suffering a heavy home defeat at the hands of Everton.

Ronald Koeman's men followed up their opening day 2-2 draw at Newcastle with a 3-0 reverse in their first league game of this campaign at St Mary's.

Before kick-off Saints celebrated the life of former owner Markus Liebherr, five years after his passing, but they were second best for most of the match and now must switch their attentions back to the Europa League before a trip to Watford to search for three points.

Matt Targett found himself in the book after just six minutes of the game.

It was a sensible one to take for the team with Romelu Lukaku having stormed away and about to break into the area. The Saints left back slid in and took him out a yard outside the box on the top left corner.

Ross Barkley took the free kick but it clipped off the top of the wall and went over.

The tone of the opening stages of the game was already set with both teams looking comfortable on the ball, Saints having more pressure but Everton looking very dangerous with their pace and power on the break.

Sadio Mane almost got in for Saints on 12 minutes but as he caught the ball he had just reached the by-line and so his shot from a very tight angle went behind. Moments later Dusan Tadic had an effort charged down after Graziano Pelle guided a far post header back to him.

Targett was the next to have a go with a drilled shot from the left but Tim How-



Sadio Mane in the thick of it (Chris Moorhouse)

TEAM NEWS

● **RONALD** Koeman made one change to the side that drew with Newcastle for the visit of Everton with Shane Long coming in for Jay Rodriguez.

● Oriol Romeu had to settle for a place on the bench with Steven Davis continuing alongside Victor Wanyama in defensive midfield.

● Jordy Clasie has been ruled out for up to three weeks with an ankle injury while Steven Caulker also missed the game after spending time in hospital

over the last week due to a sinus problem.

● **Saints:** Stekelenburg, Cedric, Fonte, Yoshida, Targett, Wanyama, S Davis, Mane, Tadic, Long, Pelle. Subs: Gazzaniga, Martina, Reed, Romeu, Ward-Prowse, Juanmi, Rodriguez.

● **Everton:** Howard, Coleman, Stones, Jagielka, Galloway, Barry, Cleverley, McCarthy, Barkley, Kone, Lukaku. Subs: Robles, Mirallas, Naismith, Besic, Deulofeu, Osman, Browning.

ard saved at his near post.

The first big chance of the game fell to Saints on 22 minutes.

Pelle collected the ball on the left and slid a neat pass into the area and Mane.

He controlled and fired low towards goal but Tim Howard saved.

It proved to be a pivotal moment as just seconds later Everton were ahead.

They broke quickly on the counter attack from the corner with Barkley feeding it to Arouna Kone.

He sprinted down the right and crossed to find Lukaku

inadequately without a centre half near him, eight yards out in a central position and he headed back across goal and in via the underside of the bar.

Maarten Stekelenburg stood strong at his near post to beat away a shot from James McCarthy to stop it getting even worse for Saints.

They should have been further behind on 29 minutes as Lukaku squared the ball to Barkley on the penalty spot.

His first time effort was only straight down the middle and Stekelenburg saved

HAVE YOUR SAY ON SAINTS - COMMENT ONLINE AT www.dailyecho.co.uk



Graziano Pelle wins the ball

with his legs.

The rebound came to Tom Cleverley but he sidefooted wide of the post with half of the goal gaping.

Victor Wanyama should have done better on 35 minutes as he had a free header from Steven Davis' right wing corner but he was off target.

Pelle was the second man in the book for dragging back Seamus Coleman.

Everton were really in total control of the game and it was no great surprise they doubled their advantage a minute before half time.

They again cut through Saints so easily, Barkley robbing Maya Yoshida on the halfway line and pressing on through the middle and playing the ball to Lukaku whose first time finish from the edge of the area gave Stekelenburg no chance.

Saints made a half time change with Oriol Romeu replacing Tadic. Romeu slotted into a defensive central midfield role with Steven Davis pushing further forward.

Wanyama had another headed chance from a corner.

This was one was tougher

but again went wide.

Pelle had a half chance fall his way as the ball broke to him on the half volley but he fired it straight at Howard.

With a two goal lead to protect Everton were sitting much deeper in the second period and making themselves hard to break down.

Saints were struggling to create much but another corner provided another sighter for Pelle but he headed over from ten yards out.

Saints made an attacking change on 72 minutes with Jay Rodriguez coming on for Shane Long.

A piece of magic almost got Saints back into it as Mane tried a speculative effort from 25 yards out which was well struck and forced Howard to dive to his right to turn wide.

Saints made a final switch with James Ward-Prowse replacing Steven Davis while Steven Naismith came on for Kone for Everton.

The Toffees wrapped up the win with six minutes remaining by making it 3-0.

Everton worked the ball across the face of the area from the right all the way to Barkley on the other side.

He took a touch to move inside onto his right foot and curled an unstoppable finish into the opposite top corner.

That pretty much rounded off a miserable day on the pitch for Saints who will be desperate to get three points on the board when they face Watford next Sunday following a return to Europa League action on Thursday night.

● Read Monday's Daily Echo for more analysis and reaction as Saints look ahead to the visit of FC Midtjylland



Everton manager Roberto Martinez

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An incident in an Eastleigh v Barnet match

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Daily Echo

Non league FOOTBALL



Gosney injured as new-look AFC Totton lose at home to Shortwood

Stags struggle to make an impact as Mike limps off

KEY man Mike Gosney hobbled off injured as AFC Totton were defeated by two early goals from Shortwood United in the Southern League South & West at the Testwood Stadium today.

On a hugely frustrating afternoon for the Stags, which saw them take more than an hour to force a save from the visitors' goalkeeper, the 2-0 loss extended their search for a South & West victory to three games, writes Peter Howard.

Jake Lee bundled home little more than a minute in for 1-0 before Tim Haddock's unbelievable, lobbed free-kick, from just past the halfway line, completely outwitted an out of position Steve Mowthorpe in the Stags net, who could only watch it sail into the empty net on eight minutes for Shortwood to seal the win.

Things went from bad to worse for Totton, who struggled for any kind of rhythm, when Gosney, usually one of their most potent threats, was hauled off clutching his back.

Just two Stags – Mowthorpe and captain Liam Hibberd – who started the 2-0 defeat in the corresponding fixture last term made manager Steve Hollick's new-look XI.

Hollick made three changes with Dave Allen, Chris Manning and Luke Dempsey dropping out for ex-Salisbury defender Dan Beckles and youngsters Jack Attrill and Jake Burgess.

The Stags grew steadily into the first-half but, unfortunately, two more-than-avoidable goals were conceded in eight minutes.

It took just a 90 seconds for Wood's Jake Parrott to launch a free-kick just into Totton territory deep into the right-hand side of the box where Joe White, a last-minute call-up following injury to James Singh, headed back across goal.

With Totton's defence busy picking their men up just outside the six-yard box and Mowthorpe nowhere to be seen, the ball bounced goalwards and striker Lee seeing it over the line.

With heads being scratched and brows furrowed among the Testwood faithful, many resorted to palms in faces six and-a-half minutes later when Wood won a free-kick on the home side's left.

Centre-back Haddock decided, audaciously, that Mowthorpe had stepped off his line enough to have cheeky stab at goal.

The ball sailed in the air and, as



Mike Gosney



James Constable scored in Eastleigh's 1-1 draw with Lincoln, full report on Monday.

jaws dropped, and Mowthorpe's heart sunk, dropped into the net for 2-0.

That was that for Wood's chances and barring a couple of half-efforts Nathaniel Sherborne volleyed wide and Burgess knocked one over the bar – the Stags were kept very quiet.

A frustrated Craig Feeney started to get more of the ball to his feet as the half wore on and made a couple of decent runs and shots but, in reality, King was a bystander in the first period.

With centre-back Tony Rolls injured, Taylor Edwards came on and

tucked into midfield while Neil Williams dropped back into defence in the second 45.

There was little to talk of in the second-half, except for a few ill-tempered moments, until Nick Watts finally pulled a save from King, as he darted to the edge of the box and

hit a low drive to the keeper's near post.

AFC Totton: Mowthorpe, Hibberd, Attrill (Rawkins 84), Williams, Rolls (Edwards 45), Beckles, Watts, Burgess, Feeney, Sherborne, Gosney (Lilley 22). Subs not used: Ferguson, Greene.

CHERRIES SPOTLIGHT: Liverpool await



Simon Francis, pictured in action against Aston Villa, was honest enough to admit his opening day error on TV

Eddie's ready for tough test

EDDIE Howe will be competing against two of his "role models" when Bournemouth face Liverpool at Anfield on Monday.

The young Bournemouth manager, widely considered among the most promising in the country, observed Brendan Rodgers' methods while the Northern Irishman was in charge at Swansea before his appointment at Liverpool.

As a young player he also worked under Sean O'Driscoll, one of his predecessors at Bournemouth who this summer became Rodgers' new assistant, and there is little question he has been strongly influenced by the two.

The three share similar philosophies on how football should be played, preferring creativity and possession to pragmatism or being direct.

"Rodgers has been a role model, really, for me," said Howe, 37. "Someone you look up to and admire. I admired watching his Swansea teams play.

"When you try and analyse games and analyse systems, and philosophies, he's certainly someone that I've looked at. I respect the way he conducts himself as well.

"I think he's now building another Liverpool team, a new Liverpool team, this year, so it'll be interesting to see how they do.

"Liverpool are going to be up there competing in the top places in the league, there's no doubt about that. That's why it's going to be one of our toughest games of the season. It's



Eddie Howe will come up against two huge influences on his career when Cherries face Liverpool on Monday night

Liverpool's first home game of the season, making it even more special. For us, we've got to make sure we turn up."

O'Driscoll was appointed to replace Liverpool's previous assistant manager, Colin Pascoe, after Rodgers controversially chose to reshape his coaching staff at the end of a disap-

pointing season.

"It won't mean anything to me during the game because you're working and you're there to do a job and get a result, but it's great to see Sean doing so well and at a great club like Liverpool, so congratulations to him on that move," said Howe.

"I thought it was nothing more than

he deserved, really, because he's an outstanding coach.

"It's great to see the good guys do well in football. I'm delighted for him but when we meet up it'll be purely work.

"O'Driscoll was probably hugely influential, without me really directly knowing it."

Francis is happy not to hide

SIMON Francis insists Cherries are perfectly prepared for the scrutiny of the world's glare — despite being first under the Premier League's all-seeing microscope.

The 30-year-old right-back took up Sky's invitation to join skipper Tommy Elphick on the settee for Goals on Sunday less than 24 hours after Cherries' opening-day defeat to Aston Villa.

Francis found himself in the eye of a potential storm as Chris Kamara ran the rule over substitute Rudy Gesteira's match-winner at Vitality Stadium but the straight-talking right-back was quick to shoulder the responsibility.

But while it was a harsh lesson in how unflattering a multitude of camera angles can be, Francis reckons the rest of last weekend's showreel is evidence that Cherries are ready for the rigours of the top flight.

Francis said: "It is such a big step and even if the game isn't shown live, there are still so many cameras there. You can guarantee it is being shown somewhere round the world.

"You are under the spotlight and there is that added pressure but I thought we handled it well on Saturday.

"We were lively, pressed high and didn't give Villa a chance on the ball. I thought we dominated most of the game with our possession and, if anything, were probably a bit surprised at our tempo and the way we created chances.

"We were guilty of not putting them away and it would have been nice to go in a goal up at half-time but we will learn from that. There were so many positives to take."

Meanwhile, Francis, a model of consistency for Cherries who has missed just five out of 128 league matches since manager Eddie Howe returned to Dean Court in October 2012, had no problem facing the inevitable questions over Villa's goal.

"We were disappointed to lose but proud of our performance so we were more than happy to go on and I thoroughly enjoyed it. It was nice to have a bit of banter with the presenters and look back at the games," he added.

"I knew they would look at the goal because Chris Kamara goes through everything from a defensive angle but there were not too many highlights from Villa's point of view apart from the goal, which was good for us.

"I had to talk through it and how Gesteira had managed to get in front of me but hopefully, that won't happen again.

"It was a good chance to look back and review it. I was honest and held up my hands. All I can do is try to learn."

Barclays Premier League



West Bromwich Albion's Claudio Jacob (left) and Watford's Troy Deeney (PA)

Watford held at home

WEST Brom registered their first point of the season after frustrating Watford, who host Saints next week, in a goalless stalemate at Vicarage Road.

Tony Pulis' side put their 3-0 opening defeat by Manchester City behind them with a typically belligerent display against the newly-promoted Hornets.

They very nearly nicked all three points towards the end but Saido Berahino, still being linked with a move away before the end of the month, fluffed his lines in front of goal.

But that would have been harsh on Watford, who just lacked the final ball.

Albion keeper Boaz Myhill was kept on his toes from early on, force into saves to keep out long-range efforts from Odion Ighalo and Troy

Deeney.

Deeney then nodded a cross from Miguel Layun wide and Jose Manuel Jurado was off target with an acrobatic volley.

Ighalo was denied from close range before crashing a rising drive narrowly over.

Allan Nyom, Watford's new Cameroon right-back, looks set to become a huge crowd favourite with his exploits at both ends of the field.

The summer signing from Udinese took Darren Fletcher's cross off the foot of Rickie Lambert as the ex-Saints striker was about to tuck in the visitors' only chance of the first half.

Berahino could have won it with ten minutes left, when Chris Brunt's cross was headed back across goal, but headed wide.

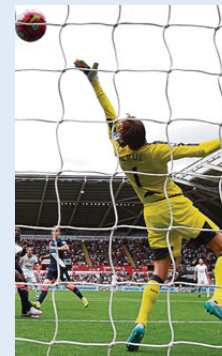
Ayew and Gomis do it again

BAFETIMBI Gomis and Andre Ayew both scored for the second game running as Swansea comfortably saw off 10-man Newcastle 2-0 at the Liberty Stadium.

Gomis opened the scoring in the ninth minute with a composed finish before Ayew, who was also on target in the opening-day 2-2 draw at Chelsea, scored with a powerful second-half header after Newcastle full-back Daryl Janmaat had been sent off for a second bookable offence by referee Mike Jones.

Janmaat was booked after clattering into Jefferson Montero twice and the Dutchman's luck ran out in the 41st-minute when he pulled the Ecuadorian back to stop him launching a Swansea attack from deep.

The defender's departure left Newcastle with a mountain to climb and Steve McClaren's decision to withdraw Moussa Sissoko - the Magpies' best player in the first half - and Papiss Cisse revealed a preference for damage limitation rather than offering any real hope.



Andre Ayew's goal

Toby at fault as Tottenham throw away a two-goal lead

Mame Biram Diouf headed home a late equaliser as Tottenham threw away a two-goal lead to draw 2-2 at home to Stoke.

Spurs, who lost both league games against the Potters last season, looked on course to secure their first three points of the campaign after first-half goals from Eric Dier and Nacer Chadli had given the hosts a commanding advantage.

Stoke, however, came storming back with Marko Arnautovic converting a 78th-minute penalty before Diouf headed in seven minutes from time to complete an unlikely comeback.

Scrutiny is likely to be placed on Mauricio Pochettino's substitutions after the Tottenham boss replaced both Harry Kane and Ryan Mason in the second half.

The changes seemed to stifle the home team's momentum and there was a smattering of boos from the White Hart Lane crowd at the sound of the final whistle.

Stoke appeared to be finding their feet but in the 19th minute the visitors were undone in the simplest of fashions as Eriksen fired a corner to the near post and Dier shrugged off Marco van Ginkel to head in Tottenham's first goal of the season for the second year running.

Kane had struggled for his usual influence in the early stages but the striker came to life at the end of the half, first seeing an emphatic finish ruled out for offside before providing a superb reverse pass into the path of Mason, whose shot was blocked by Butland at close range.

On the brink of half-time, however,



Tottenham Hotspur's Toby Alderweireld looks dejected after the game (Press Association)

Tottenham did find a second and Kane was involved again, playing in Ben Davies down the left, who looped a cross to the back post for Chadli to slot home.

Tottenham remained in the ascendancy at the start of the second period and Kane should have opened his account when Chadli found him

unmarked but the finish was again saved by Butland.

Kane was substituted for Erik Lamela and Stoke enjoyed a better spell as the contest moved past the hour mark.

The visitors found the goal they deserved as substitute Joselu was wrestled to the ground by Toby Alder-

weireld in the area and, with referee Robert Madley pointing to the spot, Arnautovic stepped up to slam the ball past Lloris.

Five minutes later, Spurs' lead was cancelled out as a neat exchange between Arnautovic and Stephen Ireland allowed the latter to cross for Diouf, who this time headed home.

Hoolahan shines

NORWICH play-maker Wes Hoolahan turned in a master class as Sunderland head coach Dick Advocaat witnessed another horror show.

The Republic of Ireland international was the architect of a 3-1 victory at the Stadium of Light, his side's first on Wearside since 1997 against the opposition which had presented the Canaries with their last Barclays Premier League victory.

First-half goals from defenders Russell Martin and Steven Whittaker and a third after the break from Nathan Redmond left the home fans among a crowd of 41,379 singing: "Are you watching, Ellis Short?"

Hoolahan played key roles in the second and third goals and repeatedly tore the home side apart.

Adam Rant



The week's big talking points
with ADAM LEITCH

Saints squad very near completion

Romeu capture adds important depth for Ron

IT'S ALL starting to fall into place.

The capture of Oriol Romeu this week has left Saints in an enviable position heading into the final couple of weeks of the transfer window.

They are in essence just one signing away from what looks a very complete squad.

Romeu fills an essential gap in the centre of midfield.

Morgan Schneiderlin's departure was never going to be easy to cover, but the truth was that even if he hadn't have moved to Manchester United then Saints really still needed additional cover there.

Victor Wanyama has become a mainstay, and has started this season very impressively again.

Jordy Clasie has come in as a replacement for Schneiderlin, but Saints needed extra depth.

Harrison Reed has been a fringe player, and though some have bemoaned his apparent lack of opportunities now, Ronald Koeman is very much a manager for the here and now.

With all due respect to Midtjylland, Saints are heavy favourites to get through to the group stages of the Europa League, especially over a two-legged tie.

Saints know that and so they need to have depth to their squad, certainly much greater than they had last season.

If they are to battle on four fronts, even if they decide to field younger teams for the Capital One Cup, then it is going to be a heavy workload, as the Europa League group stages would likely mean a minimum of ten extra games this season compared to last.

It is great to have the idea of bringing youngsters through the ranks, but you can only do that if you think they are ready.

Saints are no different from any other club, in that they are a business and will recruit in the best way possible for them.

Over the past year or so that has generally been to buy foreign players, mainly from abroad.

It is more economical, and you get proven experience for your money too.

Whether that is a contradiction with the stated philosophy of the club is up for debate, but it is also hard to prejudge. The proof ultimately will be in who exactly plays



New Saints signing Oriol Romeu at Staplewood just after signing. Pic: Matt Watson/Southampton FC

over the course of the season.

In Saints' defence, no team can continually produce world class players from the youth ranks. To expect several a season to come through capable of playing straightaway at that

level is totally unrealistic, and you cannot sit still waiting.

With Romeu in Saints look really strong.

They do obviously still need another top quality centre half, but if they

do sign one and nobody else before the window closes then full credit to Koeman and Les Reed.

They have identified exactly what was needed, and have delivered the players they wanted into the club.

Football is cut-throat

THERE has been outcry over Jose Mourinho's reaction to the Chelsea medical staff, and in particular Eva Carneiro, after last week's debacle against Swansea.

The Chelsea boss was furious that the medical staff rushed on to treat Eden Hazard, thus meaning the team would briefly be reduced to nine men, especially as it turned out he wasn't really even injured.

Mourinho bemoaned football naivety from his staff, and the medical staff look to now have their jobs altered.

There has been shock in the public but this is football.

It's a cut-throat world. All Mourinho is judged on is results, and results are therefore his main priority.

Given that those inside the football bubble can barely see outside of it, they certainly have little empathy of others within if they annoy them. A lot of the things that happen are unfair, and would not be allowed in other walks of life.

But then it's only the footballing public, who are so upset now, that allow it to happen. They tolerate anything in the name of loyalty to their club and their team winning. As such it will never change.



Jose Mourinho

Easy last fight night

INTERESTING to hear Floyd Mayweather attempting to justify picking Andre Berto as his next, and probably last, opponent.

On paper it looks like being an easy win for Mayweather, and one which would protect his unbeaten record to take into retirement if, as expected, he hangs up his gloves after this next contest.

No matter how much he tries to insist otherwise, it is going to be very hard to shake the idea that this is why this fight is taking place.

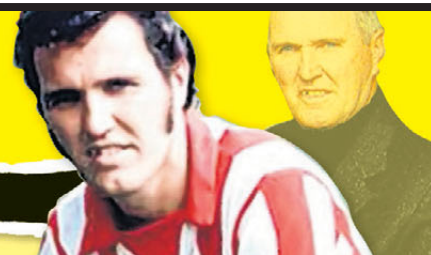
There is nothing better than a true great going out on a real high at the top of their game, which is why it's a shame if this proves to be Mayweather's swansong.

Paine's World

The Saints legend's

EXCLUSIVE

column on all things football



First day proves true worth of pre-season

THERE is an obvious danger in reading too much into pre-season results – Arsenal providing the perfect case in point last Sunday.

The Gunners absolutely demolished opposition in their warm-up fixtures, claiming five wins with an aggregate scoreline of 15-1 to lift the Asia Trophy, the Emirates Cup and the Community Shield, adding further fuel to their already over-hyped title bid.

But Arsenal were quickly brought down to earth with a lethargic, disorganised and underprepared display as West Ham ran riot at the Emirates in a 2-0 win, almost as if they assumed pre-season form would naturally manifest into a humiliation of the Hammers on the opening day of the campaign.

In truth, pre-season only really prepares you for one game – the first one – and even then, it doesn't guarantee anything. Even if you're finely-tuned physically, you still need to rediscover that competitive spirit and cutting edge so vital in the Premier League.

That's what Chelsea lacked as they found themselves drawing 2-2 with Swansea City on their own turf last Saturday. And, while Arsenal can be accused of overconfidence, the Blues quite frankly looked a little undercooked, as if they were still nursing a hangover from their title-winning end to 2014/15 and coming to terms with the Premier League starting up again.

Make no mistake about it, the Blues were lucky to claim a draw. They could have been left with an equal amount of egg on their collective face as their north London title rivals. Swansea were on the front foot from the first minute to the last and, with a bit more boldness and precision going forward, they could have taken the lead (and subsequently three points) after Thibaut Courtois' sending off.

Chelsea, on the other hand, scored their first by way of an Oscar free-kick that passed through everybody to trickle inside Lukasz Fabianski's far post and their second via an incredibly fortunate deflection – a Willian cross that travelled just centimetres before cannoning off Fernando Federico's shin and looping into an unreachable section of the net.

Overall, the defending champions finished the match with fewer shots, fewer shots on target, fewer corners, fewer successful aerial duels and fewer tackles than the visitors, in what was quite simply an inferior performance.

Looking back at the west Londoners' pre-season, however, the result perhaps shouldn't have caught so many by surprise. Chelsea, albeit facing challenging opposition in Barcelona and PSG at the International Champions Cup, and the Gunners in the Community Shield, didn't win a single game in regulation time over the summer,



Despite a brilliant pre-season, Arsenal started their Premier League campaign in terrible fashion, losing 2-0 at home to West Ham.

while conceding a collective nine goals in disturbingly un-Mourinho fashion.

Their first fixture was also a week later than Arsenal, Manchester City and Manchester United's – perhaps the biggest cause of them jogging, rather than sprinting, out of the starting blocks.

Of course, Saturday's affair was just one game out of 38 and, in the eyes of many, Chelsea are still title favourites. They do, after all, have the best player in the league, Eden

Hazard, the best manager in the league, Jose Mourinho, one of the two most potent strikers in the league, Diego Costa, and the best home record over the last two seasons.

Yet Chelsea are now already two points behind their biggest title rivals, Manchester City, and unless rapid improvements are made that margin will increase to five after facing the 2013/14 champions at the Etihad tomorrow.

If Chelsea are to get anything out of their

visit to the Etihad, their performance must be incomparable to last weekend's. While City are raring to go, the Blues look fattened on their own success.

Although the 2-2 draw can perhaps be pardoned as a typical opening weekend upset, there will be no room for excuses if Chelsea are chasing a five-point deficit by Monday. They quickly need to rediscover their title-winning edge and their ability to claim important results in important games.

Non league FOOTBALL



Lloyd Foot is 'head and shoulders above this level'

MANAGER Neil Benson believes he's pulled off one of the biggest coups of the Wessex transfer window by signing former Saints prodigy Lloyd Foot for Andover Town.

Foot previously played for Town in 2013/14, where he scored 18 goals from defence, and will rejoin after playing for Sutton United, Eastbourne Borough and Farnborough Town.

The 6ft 2 centre back comes to the Portway Stadium in a player-coaching role. "He is head and shoulders above our

level so it is great he is coming to play for us this season," explained boss Neil Benson, pictured.

"He's played numerous games for the Southampton under-18 side and he's played football in Sweden.

"He started last season with Sutton United, went to Eastbourne Borough and finished the season as skipper of Farnborough Town so it shows the quality he has got.

"It's a massive signing for us and I would say it has got to be one of the big-

gest signings in the Wessex League this summer.

"It is a real show of intention for what we want to do this season.

"I'd really like to thank the board for their support because they have been really helpful in making this signing and our others."

Foot played no part in the victories over Moneyfields and Team Solent but, as the Pink went to print, he was in line to play in the FA Cup against Gillingham Town.

Back in the game

THE last time Dan Harding played a competitive league match in Hampshire he came on as an 89th minute substitute for double goal hero Billy Sharp at St Mary's. Sharp had netted twice for Nigel Adkins' side in what would end up being a 2-2 home draw with bitter rivals Pompey, in the Championship, before being replaced by Harding.

Fast forward three years and Harding returned to competitive action in the county wearing the blue and white, not of Portsmouth, but of Eastleigh as they grabbed a last gasp 1-0 win over Boreham Wood in the Vanarama National League thanks to James Constable.

It could have been Portsmouth he signed for, but Harding, still very much a Saints fan, couldn't bring himself to move there.

He has now helped Richard Hill's side to the summit of the National League following victories over Southport (4-0) and Boreham Wood.

Meanwhile Eastleigh have announced that their National League fixtures at Stoneham Lane against Macclesfield Town on August 22 and Gateshead on September 12 will be free admission for local sports teams.

"Following the outstanding success of last season's community fixture against Macclesfield, which saw an attendance in excess of 4,000, Eastleigh are delighted to announce that they are repeating the scheme through their new community sponsors 'Total Fleet Solutions' for the same fixture this season," a club statement said.

"All local boys and girls football teams and local sports clubs are welcome on that day to watch the match with free admission."

Contact 02380 613361 or email kamor@eastleighfc.com to claim free tickets.



Eastleigh's Dan Harding

Green still has a part to play for Spitfires despite signing

Harding's arrival is not curtains on Eastleigh career

MICHAEL Green still has "a big part to play" in Eastleigh's National League promotion push – despite the arrival of ex-Saint Dan Harding.

Manager Richard Hill gave 31-year-old Harding the nod over Green for Saturday's 4-0 opening day win at Southport, *writes Peter Howard.*

But, though it marked the end of local lad Green's reign as first-choice left-back, Hill insists he is still a key squad member and may even be utilised in a central defensive role at some stage.

Hill said: "Michael Green has still got a big part to play, he's still very much part of our squad.

"I have my own thoughts on other positions Greener could play for us and I think that, in time, he would make a very good left-sided centre-back. He's brave, he heads the ball and he can run. It might even suit him better than playing left-back."

With skipper Paul Reid ruled out by a slight groin strain, Hill moved Joe Partington from right-back to centre-half at Southport last weekend.

And when Partington fell victim to a horrible challenge from Andrai Jones, resulting in the Southport man's dismissal, Green was in line to fill the central defensive void had he been unable to continue.

"Joe played on, but when it looked like he might not be able to, I was going to put Michael Green on at centre-back," said the boss. "We had worked on it last Thursday and Greener looked OK.

"He will get chances at left-back too



Michael Green still has a big part to play in the Eastleigh team, despite the arrival of ex-Saints left-back Dan Harding.

because we can't keep flogging Dan in that position. In some games we might have the luxury of taking Dan out for a while and putting Greener on the pitch to get forward more."

The impeccable Harding did everything expected of him at Southport, having signed a two-year contract

two weeks ago.

"When Dan gets the ball, he doesn't panic, and he always passes it to exactly the right place, not just in the general area of where he wants it to go," Hill said. "And what a player (ex-Luton midfielder) Andy Drury is! He was unbelievable at South-

port, with Ben Strevens, and it was a toss-up between him and Turley for our best player. Up front Ross Lafayette worked his nuts off. He had two good chances which he should have scored and didn't, but he's got the strength and power. For me, he's a young Craig McAllister."

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Non league FOOTBALL



Eastleigh are 'most desirable' club in Conference

EASTLEIGH are the club to play for in the south-east, according to manager Richard Hill.

Hill believes that, having now established themselves as one of the leading lights in the National League, the Spitfires are a club who are fast becoming victims of their own ambition when it comes to the opposition trying to prove themselves against them.

"Something that's become apparent to me is that, outside of the Football League, Eastleigh is becoming the next

most desirable club to play for," said Hill.

"Obviously people think I'm biased saying that, but I honestly do believe it.

"I feel some games we played in pre-season were more competitive than they would have been because players know the pecking order in football and there was a feeling that if things didn't work out with the club they were with, then playing well would put them in the shop window for Eastleigh.

"In that respect, they weren't really

run-of-the-mill friendlies because, in my opinion, some of the players were not only trying to impress their own managers, they were also trying to impress Eastleigh.

"No disrespect to Aldershot and Woking, but we have become the National League club to play for in the south-east.

"Everyone believes we're paying fortunes and, for that reason alone, it puts us into that bracket – even though we're not paying as much as people think we are."

Badgers rebuilding

BROCKENHURST manager Pat McManus has been working round the clock rebuilding his Badgers outfit for the Sydenhams Premier Division season.

The New Forest outfit drew with Salisbury 0-0 on the opening day of the Wessex season before suffering a 7-1 drubbing at the hands of Hamworthy United on Tuesday.

But McManus knows that the task of developing a side that included nine debutants against Steve Claridge's Whites will take time.

The Grigg Lane team has been rebuilt over the summer, with new players and backroom staff coming into the club.

Richard Morse and coach Glyn Cherrett have joined McManus in the dugout while there is plenty of new playing talent to talk of.

Just four of last term's team have returned after some of them were snapped up by clubs elsewhere and others announced that work commitments meant they could no longer play for Brock.

The club now have a new chairman too, to go with a changed complexion on the footballing side.

And things are not expected to stop there, with more arrivals expected soon to go with the plethora of new players.

With Mark Barker and Kappa Jack the only returnees to start against Salisbury there were nine debutants, including ex-Folland Sports contingent Ryan Long, Ian Calder, and Cory Cherrett.

Ex-Sholing men Jude Nwachukwu and Elliot Richards as well as Toby Cuss and Richie Hayter made their bows too and new goalkeeper Callum Maher received the man-of-the-match honours for his performance.

"It's been difficult," admitted McManus. "It's been a struggle to make sure it's all come together in time for the new season.

"But I'm happy with what we've got. There's a good blend of youth and experience, although I do anticipate more new signings in the coming weeks."

McManus was pleased with the Whites result - all things considered.

"It was a good result," McManus said. "We had a game plan and we stuck to it - it was very disciplined.

"They had the majority of possession but, considering how disjointed our pre-season has been - I hadn't got this 11 together until Friday - I'm pleased with how it went.

"We've got a good blend of youth and experience."

Spitfires make a flying start with two Vanarama victories

Hill's men top the table as they get set for Lincoln

EASTLEIGH are living proof that you shouldn't read too much into pre-season.

With just two wins from seven friendlies and a couple of indifferent performances thrown into the mix, it's fair to say that the Spitfires could have had better build-up to the new Vanarama National League campaign, *writes Wendy Gee*.

Yet Richard Hill's men have thrown the summer form book out the window this week, banking a maximum six points from their first two league games to sit top of the table going into today's visit of Lincoln.

Hill blames himself for pre-season not turning out as well as expected and even he admitted that he didn't quite know what to expect when Eastleigh got down to the nitty-gritty of competing for league points.

He needn't have worried. Having got off to a flier with a resounding 4-0 success at 10-man Southport last Saturday, the Spitfires demonstrated the importance of playing to the final whistle when James Constable popped up with a stoppage-time winner at home to Boreham Wood.

Speaking after the Southport opener, Hill admitted: "After pre-season, I wasn't sure how they (the players) would be, but I thought that if we played all right, we would be all right.

"These are players who have played at a good level for a number of years. You look at pre-season and we haven't played particularly well overall, but we played well for bits of games which gave us some sort of scope and hope that we'd come good."

Having kicked off their friendly programme with a gentle 4-0 warm-up at lower league Clanfield 85, Eastleigh plunged straight into a testing home game against Scottish Premiership outfit Partick Thistle who, on top of their higher league status, were also further down the line with their pre-season preparations.



Eastleigh manager Richard Hill has led the club to a brilliant start to the new season.

The Spitfires lost that game 2-0 and went on to lose by identical scorelines to League Two duo Oxford United and Barnet. Their best result was a 2-1 home win over Newport County, also of League Two, but they lost 2-0 with a weakened team at Conference South Havant & Waterlooville and, starting with a group of youngsters and trialists, drew 1-1 at Steve Claridge's Salisbury.

Reflecting on the build-up to the new season, Hill said: "I've been

happy with the recruitment of players, but results could have gone better, obviously. But I blame myself for the pre-season programme I put into place for the lads. The games we had were all an absolute slog.

"Every day you train in pre-season is a slog anyway and the programme of friendlies we had made things difficult. But when you get a call from Partick Thistle saying that they're at Bisham Abbey and looking for a game down south, you don't say 'no'

to a Scottish Premier side. But, looking back, maybe that came too soon for us because they were three weeks ahead of us with their preparations.

"The Oxford United game was one of the most competitive friendlies I've ever been involved in and, although I think we played Barnet at the right time, we could have planned the games better leading up to it.

"We should have been building up to that level of opposition."

Non league FOOTBALL



Stuart Green

Petersfield need to go out and express themselves

SYDENHAMS Premier Division champions Petersfield Town will go and play with "no fear" in the Southern League Central Division this term, according to manager Ian Saunders.

Petersfield started life in the Southern League with a well deserved point at title favourites AFC Rushden and Diamonds.

Prior to the season's kick off Saunders laid down their intentions.

"We have to play with no fear and not worry about the opposition," said Saun-

ders. "We need to go out and express ourselves in this league – after all it has been key to the success we have enjoyed in the last few seasons and it got us to where we are now.

"It's going to be a tough season because we have stepped up to a much higher level than we are used to. But I'm really pleased with who we have brought in and we will fear nobody, whoever we face."

The Rams blooded four new signings against Diamonds, with Ryan Woodford,

Dan Sackman, ex-Winchester midfielder Stuart Green and former Andover Town forward Michael Dixon making their debuts.

Green scored a first game goal as he tucked home at the back post unmarked on 57 minutes for the lead.

The Rams almost doubled their lead a minute later when Dixon got free of his marker but his shot went just wide of the far post. With 13 minutes left to play Delroy Gordon slammed in the equaliser for Rushden.

Bennett's brilliant

JUSTIN Bennett has picked up where he left off for Gosport Borough.

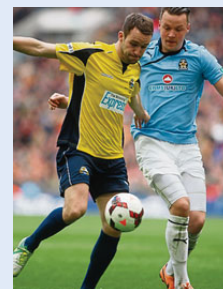
The prolific striker was the National League South's top-scorer last season and has started this season just as potently. Bennett struck all four goals as Boro' triumphed against Weston Super Mare on Tuesday night to reward Alex Pike's men with their first win of the campaign.

The striker seems to like the trip to the Somerset town, where he also bagged a hat-trick in last term's visit.

Pike, usually not one to pick out individual performances, praised his striker.

"I don't normally like giving player of the match but you can't look much further than Justin Bennett scoring four goals," he said. "Nathan Ashmore made a great save and Tom Dunford worked his socks off and did very little wrong all game. A four-goal win highlights the great team performance.

"To win away from home was very pleasing. And to keep a clean sheet and score four goals was important after Saturday's 0-0 draw at home to St Albans."



Justin Bennett

Stalwart Sherbs

STRIKER Nathaniel Sherborne has entered the top five for player appearances at AFC Totton. Sherborne surpasses Kevin Reacord in the number of games played, racking up 285 appearances after playing in the 2-2 draw with Wantage Town on Tuesday night.

Fellow Stag Mike Gosney is second in the top five on 363 appearances.

Mike Osman is top with 386 games, with James Sharrington third on 320 and Hedley Winter fourth on 301 appearances.

● For more non-league news, reports and reaction throughout the week, log on to dailyecho.co.uk.

AFC Totton need more game time to bed in new players

Rowland sees a lot of positives in opening games

AFC Totton's new-look team are looking to iron out the creases in their game over the coming weeks, according to first-team coach Dave Rowland.

Rowland and goalkeeping coach Jamie Cotton took charge of the Stags for their 2-2 draw at the Testwood Stadium with Wantage Town while manager Steve Hollick and assistant Lee Burch were both away, writes Peter Howard.

The draw against the Freds followed on from an opening day defeat at Taunton Town.

And while there was plenty of positives to take from both games, including two goals each from ex-Sholing man Nick Watts and Mike Gosney, who signed permanently from Gosport Borough during the summer, Rowland knows there is more to come from Totton.

"We've got little things we need to iron out defensively," Rowland explained. "The lads are still getting used to playing with each other.

"It's a new unit, a new back four. There are a lot of new players in there so they will develop.

"The games are coming thick and fast now. We've got Shortwood, Larkhall, it's Saturday, Tuesday, Saturday, Tuesday now, so that's all we want now is more games.

"That equates to more chances to play these lads together. It's not all negative we've played some great football in both games and created chances, so we're pleased with that."

Rowland has pinpointed the areas for improvement.

"A little bit of organisation, that's the main area we need to improve," he stated. "They've had pre-season together, but that's when you're looking at lots of different players.

"I think now as we start to get our squad together, they'll certainly gel. "They're showing signs of doing



Former Sholing man Nick Watts has been among the goals for AFC Totton already this season.

that already, so we're positive."

Rowland came over with Cotton and Burch from Hythe & Dibden to join Hollick's backroom team and is enjoying the new challenge.

"Myself, Lee Burch and Jamie, the goalkeeper coach, we've worked together a couple of years now," he said. "We've come in alongside Steve as the manager and it's gone really

well. We've been really pleased with how pre-season has gone. But we're learning things about us and our players, so that's still to do develop further. The lads have enjoyed it so far and we've certainly enjoyed it. We just need to keep putting the same performances in, if we do that, the results will come."

Rowland isn't about to talk about

setting targets and just wants the Stags to get their first win under their belts.

"I'm not going to put any points targets on anything but just to get that first win off the mark," he said. "There is pressure and expectation because we've had a good pre-season and we've got some real quality in that changing room."

Non league FOOTBALL



'Unassuming' Bentley is razor sharp in front of goal

BEFORE arriving at Winchester City, the only thing Paul Wiltshire knew about Warren Bentley was what he'd read in the papers.

Once he had met him in person, City's new assistant boss realised the area's most prolific goalscorer was nothing like he had imagined. Bentley possesses none of the swagger you might expect from a man who has banged in over 150 goals in the last three years.

Slight of frame and modest, it's hard to believe he is a player who has taken the

Southern One South & West by storm this week, netting a staggering nine goals in just 180 minutes of football.

Having blitzed Bridgwater with five goals in an astonishing 42-minute spell as City opened the season 7-2 victors, goal-getter Bentley was at it again at Wimborne Town. He sank a hat-trick to help put City 5-4 up at Cuthbury. And even when they went down to ten men after Adam Tomasso had been dismissed for handball, the 25-year-old pulled another magical finish out of

his impressive repertoire to secure a breathless 6-5 win.

Wiltshire, in charge in the absence of holidaying manager Paul Masters, admitted: "I'd never spoken to Warren before I came here. I knew his reputation, but only from the reports I'd read in the newspaper. He's completely different to what I was expecting. You think of goalscorers being a bit brash and 'look at me, here I come', but Warren's nothing like that. He's a real unassuming lad. I like him a lot."

Just when he thought it was all over City come knocking

Wiltshire teams up with old Saints pal in the dugout

PAUL Wiltshire admits he had all but given up on football when Dave Malone talked him into joining Winchester City last month.

With Paul Masters in need of a new assistant following the departure of Glenn Burnett, Malone turned to one of his old Eastleigh contacts to fill the void, writes Wendy Gee.

City's director of football knew Wiltshire from his days as reserve team manager with the Spitfires and had an inkling he and Masters would make a good match.

Both were seriously good midfielders in their prime and both came through the youth/reserve ranks at Southampton.

"I knew Dave and (chairman) Paul Murray from the Eastleigh days and Paul Masters and I are a couple ex-Saints boys who played in the same position," smiled Wiltshire.

"When I said that maybe I'd retire from football, Dave persuaded me back and, after six games and six wins, I'm getting the bug back.

"Dave's a canny operator who pulls no punches. To some people he can be a bit blunt, but he knows what he wants."

Given his last experience in management, Wiltshire is just pleased to be turning up for football again with a smile on his face.

Three years ago he lost his job with Sydenhams Premier Division outfit Fawley AFC, abruptly ending what he considered to be a job well done under difficult circumstances.

"I've had some enjoyable times in football, but that was the most unpleasant experience," he recalled.

"If I'd been doing badly and done something wrong, I would have held my hands up. But we had no budget and still we were going to places and people were saying how nice it was to see the football we were playing. Since all that Fawley business I've



Warren Bentley (right) scored five times in just 42 minutes during an astonishing spell for Winchester.

done nothing football-wise."

To say Wiltshire is pleased to have revived his love of the game at Winchester would be an understatement.

Since stepping in for the holidaying Masters, he has overseen two gob-smacking City victories on their return to the Southern League.

Last Saturday they wiped the floor with Bridgwater 7-2 at the Denplan City Ground and that was followed by a pulsating 6-5 scoreline at Wimborne on Tuesday.

Speaking after the Bridgwater game, lit up by master marksman Warren Bentley striking five times

in the opening 42 minutes, Wiltshire beamed: "In all my time in the game, that was probably the best 45 minutes of football I've experienced. It was an absolute dream.

"The lads are still on a high from the success they had last season and hopefully we'll keep that going."

Stone is promoted

FAREHAM Town have promoted Steve Stone to manager after the departure of long term boss Matt Parr last week.

Stone was Parr's assistant but has now been elevated to the helm and, once he's returned from holiday on 22 August, will take charge of his first game against Andover Town in the Sydenhams Premier Division.

A club statement read: "The club are pleased to confirm that following Matt Parr stepping down from the manager's job last week that we have promoted assistant manager Steve Stone to manager of the first team.

"Steve brings a wealth of experience to the role including coaching the Royal Navy and Army Representative Teams. He holds both a UEFA A license and a UEFA Goalkeeping A License.

"He is also an FA tutor delivering all FA/UEFA courses up to UEFA B License. We are very pleased that Steve has accepted the position and we look forward to working together to realise the potential within the club."



Matt Parr

Salisbury sign Tom

STEVE Claridge has added another signing to his Salisbury side, bringing in Tom Whelan from Poole Town.

The Sydenhams Premier new boys snapped up the 19-year-old midfielder, who has also played for Verwood Town, to provide cover for the injured Brandon Mundy and Sam Roberts.

"I've watched Tom for a long time and noted his progress," said Claridge.

"I always thought he would fit in well with what we are doing at Salisbury FC and wanted him for the old club last season before all the problems.

"Then this year, I thought I had lost out to Poole but was delighted when Tom came on the market again and I've snapped him up. He is a talented midfield player who will give us a new dimension."

Non league FOOTBALL



Wimborne's Steve Cuss

Wimborne's Jack Lupton ruled out until Christmas

RUEFUL boss Steve Cuss has revealed Wimborne Town anticipate being without midfielder Jack Lupton until Christmas.

The 23-year-old is due under the knife next month in a bid to solve an ankle problem, and he could remain sidelined for as long as ten weeks after the surgery.

Lupton, who is a former student at Bournemouth University, was a squad regular last term and Cuss is hoping that the emerging talent can come back

stronger than before.

"It's a shame for Jack as he was desperate to get a full pre-season under his belt and to be in contention for a first-team place," said Cuss.

"He picked up the injury on the eve of the first pre-season training session and has not been able to take part since.

"It's bad news for him that it requires an operation to tidy it up. We wish him well and, hopefully, we will see him back sooner rather than later."

Wimborne lost their opening match 4-1

to Shortwood United, which certainly didn't represent the start Cuss was hoping for.

"I was disappointed with our defending and that's something we have to be better at. I think we can score goals but we have to stop them going in at the other end," he said.

"The performance in general was okay but there were individual errors for the goals. In order to rectify that, the emphasis is not just on the back four and the goalkeeper but on the whole team."

No hard feelings

MANAGER Tom Killick insisted there were no hard feelings from neighbours Wimborne Town over Poole Town's last-ditch swoop for winger Luke Holmes.

The former Cherries youngster, who is the son of Matty Holmes, spent the latter part of last season on loan at Cuthbury and then penned forms for the forthcoming campaign.

But, having caught Killick's eye when the fierce rivals met in a pre-season friendly, the Dolphins quickly moved for the protégé and have agreed terms on a one-year contract.

"He was someone I had been made aware of and having seen him in our friendly match with Wimborne, we felt he would only improve further with us," said Killick.

"I am delighted to have persuaded him to come over."

In a deal described as "entirely separate" by Killick, non-contract Poole winger Carl Preston is set to join Wimborne on a standard registration with a gentleman's agreement that the deal is "temporary".

The Tatnam boss added that opposite number Steve Cuss, formerly his assistant at Poole, had reacted well to losing one of the Magpies' hottest prospects.

"I think he's okay about it," added Killick.

"He didn't want to obstruct Luke's progression and was very co-operative and in turn, we have co-operated with them with regard to Carl.

"He (Preston) was concerned he was unlikely to start the season and badly needs games to get fully fit.

"It is very much a temporary thing that suits all parties for now."

On Holmes's departure, Cuss admitted he was disappointed but had only good things to say about the player and added he supported his decision to play at the highest possible level.

"I have nothing but positive things to say about Luke," he said. "He had a real impact for us on loan last season and for a young player to come in and do as well as he did spoke volumes for him.

"He trialled with professional clubs during pre-season and we were delighted when he decided to sign for us but, equally, he now has the opportunity to play at a higher level.

"I am disappointed to lose a good player but that is no reflection on Luke at all.

"We constantly talked about his options throughout the summer and he simply wants to play at the highest possible level. I fully support his decision to do that."

Romsey boss delighted with his two 'landmark signings'

Page and Boud added to Town squad this week

ROMSEY Town boss Andy Samuels was delighted to have made two "landmark signings" in the space of a week.

The capture of Matt Page from Sydenhams Premier Division side Fareham Town on the eve of the new Wessex One season was quickly followed by that of Wayne Boud, joining from Moneyfields, writes Peter Howard.

"It's terrific news for the lads and of course the club that we've managed to get a couple of players in who we believe will help push us forward," said Samuels.

"Matt and Wayne were pre-season targets of mine and we're extremely pleased to have finally secured their services.

"As I've stated publicly over the past couple of weeks building up to the new season, it's about progressing the club and having players like Matt and Wayne here shows the rest of the lads that we're trying to move the whole thing forward on the pitch by bringing in proven quality.

"All of the signings we've made so far this season we believe have added quality to our squad from last year.

"You always lose one or two for various reasons and as a club we've also let one or two go but we're very happy with their replacements and the commitment levels of the lads that remain.

"It's a long season and no doubt we'll pick up injuries and suspensions along the way so it's very important that we have strength in depth and a real competition for places.

"All the squad know that we want to progress this season and they're all fully focussed on what needs to be done."

Page, a young defender, joins as back up with Boud, who also played for the Creeksiders.

"I've joined Romsey to be part of a



Wayne Boud (red) has moved to Romsey from Moneyfields, boosting the club's hopes for the new season.

team that aspires to achieve and am very much looking forward to playing under Andy and Dave," he said.

"It's a management team that I feel will give me belief and confidence on the pitch to allow me to express myself. I can see Romsey going places in the future and I want to be part of that journey."

Those sentiments were echoed by

Bound, who added: "I feel I can offer my experiences I've gained at my previous clubs and help Romsey achieve their targets. Romsey will give me the opportunity to play and enjoy my football again and I can't wait to get started."

Samuels has stated recent that this season is all about progression.

Part of that has been constructing

a team that can better the second-to-bottom finish of last season.

Samuels believes that Page and Boud recognise what Romsey are trying to achieve.

"I know the lads are here because they want to be," he said.

"They can see what we're trying to achieve and they believe they can play their part in that."

Non league FOOTBALL



Progressive Braishfield invite new players for trials

BRAISHFIELD FC are making good progress as they prepare for the forthcoming 2015/16 season.

The club are holding weekly training sessions at the Recreation Ground and, as ever, would welcome any new recruits, for both their first team who return to the Southampton League Premier Division after a 15-year absence and also their reserve side who will be playing in Junior Division 4.

So far, the first string have played two friendly fixtures. They took on Queens

Keep Reserves at Lordshill Rec and a goal in each half secured a fine victory against a physical side who play in the Hampshire League Combination.

Braishfield had the better of play for lengthy periods but only had a strike from Naz Brora to show for their efforts, as numerous chances were squandered and they were nearly punished as the Tax Men ended the game strongly.

A good spell of pressure saw the hosts awarded an 88th-minute penalty but the spot kick was crashed against the bar

before a stoppage time strike from Ben Jacobs put the issue beyond doubt.

Then on Tuesday evening they entertained Bournemouth League side Fordingbridge Turks and won an entertaining game 3-2, with goals from Luke and Ash Shergold, as well as Ben Mus-selwhite.

This week sees the reserves with two home fixtures, on Tuesday evening against Broughton Reserves and on Thursday against local Sunday league team JSC. Both kick-off at 6.30pm.

Signings thrill boss

OTTERBOURNE have made a flying start to the Hampshire Premier League season.

With two 6-0 victories and a 2-0 win in their latest game against Overton United, the Otters are laying the foundations for a successful season.

The results have been inspired by a summer of recruitment that has got manager Richard Luffman excited.

Otters have brought in goalkeeper Dan Kempson, Mitch Parker and centre back Scott Gilham in recent weeks and Luffman believes that has added to an already top quality team.

He said: "We brought in Kempson from Stockbridge and he is somebody we thought was the best keeper that we played against last season. He made the penalty save to actually knock us out of the semi-final of the Open Cup!"

Gilham, who has played for Winchester City and Folland Sports, was much in demand but Otters won the battle for the highly-rated defender.

"We had to beat off competition from Stoneham and Hamble to sign him.

"His steel along with centre back Sam Doswell, who is ex-Fareham and Follands, and James Eyles, a former Pompey and Winchester man, gives us a back four that would be better than most Wessex league clubs.

"With those two signings, plus Kempson, means we have a better chance of conceding fewer goals. Last season our Achilles heel was the goals conceded. We scored lots but gave up best part of ten points through sloppy goals against."

Former Romsey Town star, Parker, is another one to watch out for.

"He has great ability, and scored two in two in pre-season as well as making numerous others," purred Luffman. "Again, he's a Wessex League player that will help us get on the front foot in games."

"With players like Steve Hall, Tom Ashton and Tom Sands we should score plenty of goals and, with the defensive lads signed, we now have a better base to build from."



Richard Luffman

Town leading the pack after first games is no big shock

New signings are experienced and will be huge boost

ANDOVER Town have made a flying start to the Sydenhams Premier Division campaign, which isn't astounding considering the quality and experience they've brought in.

Ex-Saint Kevin Gibbens, who's played for Blackfield & Langley and Sholing in recent seasons, joined Town this week along with former AFC Bournemouth midfielder Elliot Ward, who was at Dorchester Town last term, *writes Peter Howard.*

Gibbens is reunited with ex-Watersiders manager John Robson, who is now the assistant manager at the Portway Stadium.

The impact of the two former professionals has been clear to see straight away as Andover stormed to the top of the fledgling Wessex league earlier this week, with Gibbens netting twice in a 3-2 victory over Team Solent at Test Park.

That victory came off the back of a 2-1 win over Moneyfields on the opening day.

Town boss Neil Benson labelled the signings as a "clear intention" of their ambitions this year.

Talking about Ward, he said: "It's a good signing.

"He is just a quality player who has played first team games at professional level so that just shows the level of quality he has.

"He will add an extra attacking dimension to our midfield and I look forward to getting him up to fitness."

Benson was also enthused about the addition of Gibbens.

"I remember him playing for Saints as a youngster; I believe he even replaced Matt Le Tissier in one game," he said.

"He also had a good spell with Sholing where he scored plenty of goals – to score that many at that level shows how good he is."

Gibbens made nine appearances for Saints in the late 90s while Ward was



Former Saints player Kevin Gibbens (right) has joined Andover Town, along with ex-Cherries midfielder Elliot Ward.

a product of the Cherries academy and made his debut in 2011 in a 5-0 League Cup victory over Dagenham & Redbridge.

Town have also announced the signing of ex-Cyprus league professional Chris Onoufriou, who previously had spells with the likes of AFC Totton

and Blackfield & Langley.

Onoufriou also had a short spell with the former Andover FC during the 2010/11 season.

Asked if Town had finished their transfer business this season, Benson indicated they had not.

"There might be one or two more to

come in," he said.

"But I think the signings we have already made just shows the intentions we have for the club this year.

"We are targeting quality and experienced players and I am sure fans will be pleased with what we are trying to do."

Saints Spotlight



Saints Spotlight



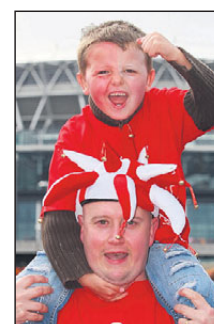
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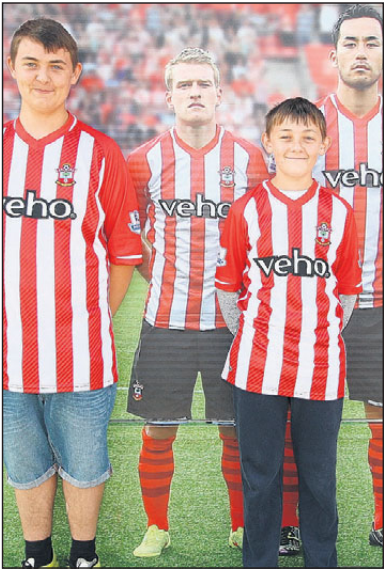
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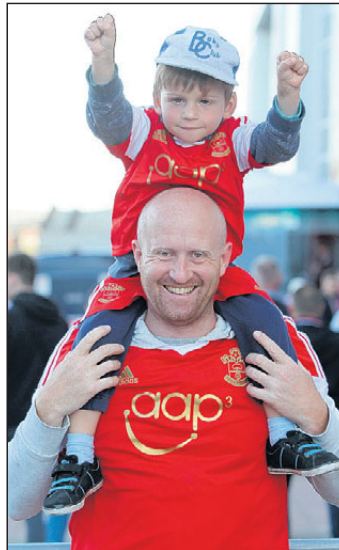
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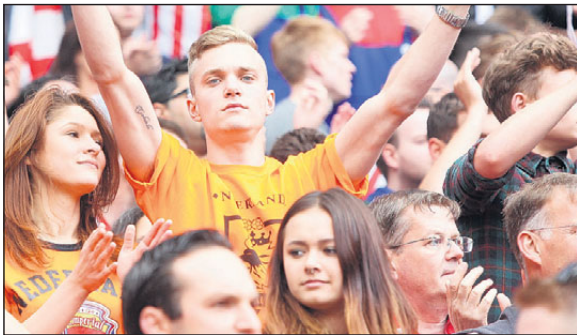
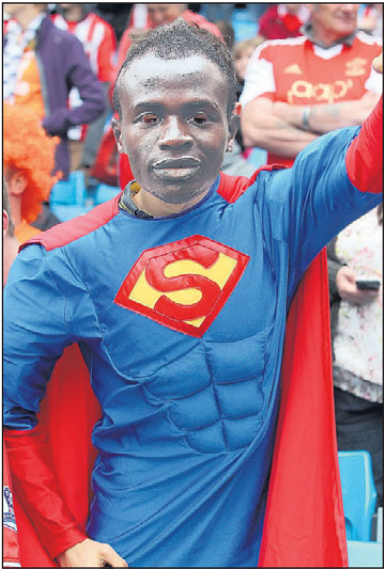
Saints Spotlight



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HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015



Big week for Hants

HAMPSHIRE will be aiming to reach another quarter-final this week.

After being awarded both points for their abandoned game against Glamorgan at Cardiff by the England and Wales Cricket Board, Hampshire are well placed to finish in the top four of Royal London One-Day Cup Group B.

James Vince's side are third, with two games to play - against Lancashire at The Ageas Bowl on Monday and Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge on Wednesday.

Following the decision made by the ECB's Cricket Discipline Commission last Monday, one win will be enough to assure Hampshire another last-eight berth in the final week of August.

Hampshire are three points clear of Kent and Lancashire, who are level on five points in fourth and fifth place.

They will want to guarantee themselves a quarter-final place on Monday, especially as group leaders Notts have won all five games they have played.

Former Hampshire star Imran Tahir has taken six wickets at 21 apiece in three games for Notts, but is unavailable on Wednesday.



Imran Tahir

Lancs win QF thriller

HAMPSHIRE will be the only South Group team at Finals Day - after a tie at Canterbury.

Lancashire beat Kent on fewer wickets lost in the last quarter final after responding to the home side's 142 all out with 142-6.

Former Hampshire star Matt Coles was the pick of the bowlers on either side with 3-22 from his four overs.

His victims included England's Jos Buttler, whose 37-ball 53 ended when he was caught off the second ball of the final over.

But James Faulkner hit the required two runs off the final ball to book Lancashire's place at Edgbaston on August 29. Earlier, Ashwell Prince made 60.

Northants and Warwickshire are the other semi-finalists after beating Essex and Sussex.

Hants reach their sixth Finals Day

By Simon Walter
simon.walter@

THE big games always seems to bring the best out in James Vince.

Friday night was no exception as Hampshire's captain ensured his side extended their Finals Day appearances record to six, *writes Simon Walter.*

A year after his unbeaten 92 in last year's quarter-final against Notts at Trent Bridge, Vince lit up the cathedral city of Worcester under leaden skies with a majestic first T20 century.

Vince needed only 65 balls for his 107 (13 fours, three sixes) as Hampshire amassed 196-4 - before winning by 17 runs on Duckworth-Lewis- Stern when bad light forced the players off, with Worcestershire 58-2 after 8.1 overs of their reply.

It was all over when Chris Wood, having taken the big wicket of Moeen Ali and run out Tom Kohler-Cadmore with a sensational pick up and direct hit from short cover, suffered a broken nose as he attempted to take a catch at deep square leg.

Worcestershire's bowlers suffered rather more than a bloody nose, conceding 88 from the first 58 balls against Vince and Michael Carberry - including 61 off the first six powerplay overs. Saeed Ajmal (0-38), the world's leading T20 spinner, bowled two of them and could not contain the pair in difficult conditions.

Carberry lofted the Pakistani's first ball for four over cover and the evening did not get any better for the off-spinner.

Jack Shantry came in for particularly brutal treatment. Having conceded two fours off the opening over, the left-armer was swept for the first of Vince's three sixes at the beginning of the sixth over.

And that was after Hampshire's opening pair blitzed four successive fours - three



Chris Wood posted this picture of his broken nose, tweeting: No ladies for me for a while!! #brokennose (Twitter/@CWoody27)

of them for Carberry against Joe Leach.

Carberry, who scored a match-winning T20 quarter-final hundred against Lancashire two years ago, looked in ominous form as he drove, pulled and clipped boundaries durinthe last half of the fourth over.

It was a very different sort of hat-trick to the one that Leach celebrated a week earlier, when he took the first three wickets of a Royal London One-Day Cup match against Northants.

Carberry was run out for

42 (28 balls, five fours) after Vince called for a second in the tenth over.

But Adam Wheeler responded with a 22-ball 32. The first of his two fours came courtesy of a misfield at deep cover - the first boundary in 13 deliveries from Moeen - and another by debutant Joe Clarke allowed Vince to bring up Hampshire's 100 from 67 balls.

Vince soon reached a 37-ball fifty and deposited Barnard for six over mid-wicket as 18 came off the 16th.

Wheeler swung Ajmal's last ball for six before drilling a full toss into the hands of deep cover.

But there was no stopping Vince, who ended the 18th over by sweeping successive Leach full tosses for six and four.

After an innovative ramp shot for four, Vince elegantly drove his 13th and final boundary to reach his hundred from 61 balls.

Sean Ervine (2) was run out by Shantry's inadvertent deflection as the seamer followed through.

And, needing four off the final ball to take Hampshire to 200, Owais Shah (5) was caught behind.

As it turned out, 196 was plenty. Moeen Ali, the pick of the Worcestershire attack with his off-spin, drove Will Smith and Fidel Edwards for fours in the opening two overs, which also contained boundaries for Daryl Mitchell as the home side raced to 19-0 from the first two balls.

But then Moeen top edged a pull against Wood's second ball and was caught by Wheeler.

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015



Edwards swung the ball at a fearsome pace in the fourth over but Mitchell, the scourge of Hampshire in recent LV County Championship matches, hit Wood for four over cover at the beginning of the fifth which also saw Kohler-Cadmore thump the left-armer back down the ground.

But Wood responded brilliantly when Kohler-Cadmore (9) attempted a quick single against the penultimate ball of the powerplay, from Edwards.

Fielding at short extra cover, Wood picked up the ball left-handed and threw down the stumps in one seamless movement.

Worcestershire ended the powerplay on 39-2 and a brilliant first over from Yasir Arafat followed to put the home side well behind the DLS target.

Whiteley did his best to get Worcestershire nearer the required rate with successive straight sixes in Dawson's first over.

But the light was fading



Chris Wood moments after his nose was broken (Dave Vokes)

badly when Whiteley (16*) pulled his eighth ball, from Arafat, to a squinting Wood at deep square leg.

Worcestershire were left to rue their lack of floodlights (hence the 5.30pm start) as they suffered a fifth defeat in as many quarter-finals and their first at New Road.

Mitchell was unbeaten on a run-a-ball 20 when the officials, Tim Robinson and Rob

Bailey, decided the light was too bad to continue.

He said: "It's pretty tough to take but the umpires are two experienced guys so I won't question it. If we're honest we were behind the eight ball after the way Vincey played.

"It was a good pitch and they were slightly above par which we felt was about 180. We still thought it was getta-

ble but with the weather not being great we just tried to get ahead of the Duckworth Lewis. Unfortunately we lost a couple of wickets and weren't able to."

Hampshire can now look forward to a sixth successive Finals Day appearance – a run that began back in 2010.

Vince is the fourth Hampshire batsman to score a T20 century and his 107 ranks as the county's second highest individual score in the format. "After falling short on 99 against Kent earlier this season] it was great to get three figures," he said.

"We were going to bowl because of the wet weather so it turned out to be a good toss to lose!

"It was a good pitch, normally they can be a bit slower at New Road, so it was good to bat in conditions similar to what we get at home.

"All the batters around me came in and scored quickly which was a great help.

"You never feel like you have enough runs, especially when you look at their team and on a small ground, but the lads bowled and fielded really well.

"It means a lot to get through to Finals Day, hopefully we can now go on and win it."

Hampshire have twice made higher scores this season (199-5 against Middlesex at Lord's and 204-3 against Sussex at Hove).

But this was only two shy of their highest total at the knockout stage of the competition (their 198-5 in last season's quarter-final, against Notts at Trent Bridge).

Hampshire bowling: Smith 1-0-10-0, Edwards 3-0-17-0, Wood 2-0-10-1, Yasir Arafat 1-1-0-5-0, Dawson 1-0-14-0.

Worcestershire bowling: Shantry 3-0-37-0, Leach 4-0-40-2, Saeed Ajmal 4-0-38-0, Moeen Ali 4-0-33-0, Barnard 2-0-22-0, D'Oliveira 3-0-21-0.

McLaren speeds in

HAMPSHIRE have signed South African all-rounder Ryan McLaren for the rest of the LV County Championship season.

The 32-year old will play in the last four games, starting at Durham on September 1, following Tasmania's decision to recall Jackson Bird.

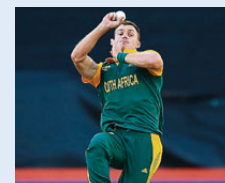
Bird has played his last match of the season for Hampshire as his state want him back to prepare for the start of the Australian domestic season.

McLaren, a right-arm medium-fast bowler and hard-hitting lower-order batsman, took 112 Championship wickets at 25.3 for Kent from 2007-09, as well as scoring 863 runs at 21.6.

He played two Tests, 12 T20 internationals and 54 one-day internationals, but was dropped from the Proteas' World Cup squad in January.

McLaren was South Africa's second top wicket taker in 2014 with 23 wickets at 25.34, but missed out to Wayne Parnell.

Hampshire coach Dale Benkenstein said: "I know Ryan very well, he's a quality player who still wants to play a lot of cricket." McLaren has 4194 first-class runs at 32 and 337 wickets at 26.33.



Ryan McLaren (Getty)

Hants tyro impresses

BRAD Taylor was the stand-out player for England Under-19s in the opening game of the one-day series against their Australia counterparts – albeit in a losing cause.

The Hampshire off-spinner showed many of his teammates how to bat with an unbeaten 33 (36 balls, five fours) as England were bowled out for 206 in 45.1 overs at Gosforth on Tuesday.

He then took the only two wickets to fall as Australia chased the runs down with 58 balls to spare.

Taylor, who finished with 2-48 from his ten overs, will be aiming to help level the series at Derby on Monday after the second of the five matches was rained off at Chesterfield.

Mason Crane was in the original 16-man England squad but his Hampshire commitments took priority.

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015



Billy Taylor at Lord's with the 2009 Friends Provident Trophy. He did not play in the final but was a key player in Hampshire getting there.

Billy: I prefer umpiring...

FORMER Hampshire seamer Billy Taylor insists he prefers umpiring to playing.

Taylor has umpired his first T20 Blast match this season, as well as five Royal London One-Day Cup games and three LV County Championships matches, having made his first-class umpiring debut last year, *writes Simon Walter*.

Southampton-born Taylor, who won the County Championship with Sussex in 2003 before spending the next six seasons with his home county, enjoys umpiring more than playing.

"No disrespect to playing but I love umpiring and I hope to do it for a long time," he says. "I hugely enjoyed my time playing cricket and there are moments as a player I'll always remember."

"Taking a hat-trick and scoring the winning runs off the last ball of a one-day game [both for Hampshire, against Middlesex and Derbyshire in 2006] stand out."

"Those moments will always stay with me but I feel at home in the middle as an umpire and enjoy seeing the game from a different angle."

Taylor umpired former Hampshire Imran Tahir's debut for Nottinghamshire recently. "I see a lot more of the game than I did as a player," he continued. "I was normally sweeping to Immy or at short fine leg so it's nice to see what he's doing and it was really good to catch up with him."

"Seeing fantastic spells of bowling and seeing how players go about their business is fascinating."

Taylor has also noticed a stark dif-



Hampshire celebrate Billy Taylor's hat-trick against Middlesex in 2006

ference in concentration levels between umpiring and playing. "Physically it may not be as tough but it's tougher mentally because you have to be switched on for every ball," he said.

"As a player I could switch off down at fine leg and get away with it but you can't switch off as an umpire."

"All of a sudden you have to make a match-changing decision that people will be judging you for over the course of four days."

"You make decisions that change the course of a game and you hope you get more right than wrong."

"But my playing experience helps me, I can appreciate how tough it as

a player."

It can be a tough as an umpire too. Taylor officiated an RLODC match at the Swalec Stadium on the same pitch that caused Hampshire's abandonment two days later.

He and Paul Baldwin marked it above average, but the same colleague made a very different decision 48 hours later.

"It must have been difficult for them but they handled it well," he said. "The guys made the right call and thankfully no-one was hurt."

Taylor is on the ECB's reserve umpire list but is aiming to be promoted to the full list soon.

"I'm on a summer contract so will get my P45 in September and hopefully get taken on again in April," explained the 38 year-old, who spends his winters working for a friend's dog walking company, 'Wag and Walk'.

"I've got a Lab Retriever and like to be outside so it suits me and keeps me fit," he explains.

Taylor, whose first game as an umpire was Hampshire 2nds game against Southampton Solent University, has been back to officiate 2nd XI matches on the Nursery Ground, most recently in June.

No doubt he will one day get the chance to walk to the Ageas Bowl from his Hedge End home to umpire a first-class match.

"It's a very different Hampshire side to the one I last played in but even if the personnel was similar it wouldn't bother me," he said. "I'd be ready to do it this season if I was called upon."

Bird's sad at Pup exit

JACKSON Bird admits he was sad to see Michael Clarke step down as Australia captain.

The outgoing Hampshire fast bowler, who took 13 wickets in his three Tests under Clarke two years ago, admits the Ashes losers are in a period of transition.

He said: "It looks like there could be a few changes. I'm obviously sad to see Michael go."

"He's been a great captain for Australia for a while now."

Clarke made the first of his three County Championship centuries for Hampshire against Nottinghamshire at Trent Bridge in July, 2004.

But 'Pup' was feeling very different emotions after England reclaimed the Ashes with victory by an innings and 78 runs on the same ground last week.

He made his decision to step down as Australia's captain after an extraordinary few days that began with his side bowled out for 60 on the first morning.

"It will be interesting to see what happens in the first Test of our summer."

There will be a few guys pushing for selection so it's a crucial start to the season. You never know really.

"There will be a core group and the bowling group will probably stay the same but it will be interesting to see who fills those spots."

"There are a couple of guys retiring and Brad Haddin and Shane Watson getting dropped."

"Brad is 37 now and it would be great to see him play again but I'm not sure how long he has left to play."

Bird believes that Watson – a former Hampshire player like Clarke and himself – may return to the side.

"I think Shane has still got a lot to offer for Australian cricket," he continued.

"Six months ago, we wouldn't have thought this would happen but fair play to England – they played well in their home conditions."

"Our batsman are good with the ball coming on to the bat a bit more in Australia."

"Over here, I think your technique does get tested a lot more than it does back home."

"The English bowlers exploited a few technical issues that our guys had and they bowled well."



Michael Clarke at Trent Bridge last week

HAMPSHIRE CRICKET 2015



Jackson Bird celebrates one of his 19 LV County Championship wickets, against Sussex at Hove in June (LMI Photography)

Bird: Hants can definitely stay up

JACKSON Bird is backing Hampshire to stay up without him - and believes some of his county teammates will go on to play for England.

The Australian has returned to Tasmania after taking 19 LV County Championship wickets at 39.7, having missed the first six weeks of the season with a freak shoulder injury, *writes Simon Walter*.

He was just rediscovering his best form when he was recalled after the 216-run win against Warwickshire, but will be replaced by former South Africa all-rounder Ryan McLaren for the last four games.

"Hampshire are more than capable of staying up without me here," he said.

"We've struggled but have certainly got the players and we're coming back into it more now.

"We dominated this game [beating Warwickshire by 216 runs] and hopefully we can take that momentum into the next few games now.

"Mason and Fidel take wickets and someone like Tommo will come in and do his role and tie up one end to allow Fidel to do what he does best."



Jackson Bird at The Ageas Bowl

Bird had hoped a good start to his first stint of county cricket would give him a chance of breaking into Australia's Ashes squad.

It was not to be, but from what he saw of his Hampshire teammates he believes they could soon be playing Test cricket.

"I definitely think there are some

future England players in the Hampshire team," he said.

"James Vince is as good a player as I have played with. He hits the ball so cleanly and in the shorter forms as well.

"He's an excellent t20 player and 50-over player and I think he has got a bright future for England.

"It was good to see him get a century, hopefully he can finish the season strongly.

"The young leggie, Mason Crane, has got a big future ahead of him as well. He has all the attributes.

"He gets good fizz on the ball, good drift and has good control for an 18-year-old. He showed that against Warwickshire. He got wickets and put us in control.

"And Liam Dawson can do very well if he can score consistent runs batting at six and pick up wickets with his left-arm spin."

Bird, who played the last of his three Tests against England at Durham two years ago, was relieved not to be reminded of Australia's Ashes defeat too often last week.

"I didn't get too much stick!" he laughed.

"I gave a bit out when we won the second Test and then I had to keep quiet after that!

"It was a bit of friendly banter. I didn't go to any games but I watched a fair bit of it on TV.

It was a great series. Australia didn't play as well as they would have liked but fair play to England's bowling attack.

"They were brilliant in every match apart from Lord's."

Devon ace delighted to be at Hants

RYAN Stevenson says his first month at Hampshire has been "a whirlwind".

The Devon all-rounder was awarded a contract until the end of the season after impressing during the first two weeks of his trial, *writes Simon Walter*.

Stevenson once had a promising golf career but has focused on cricket this year.

Having grown up playing for Dartington & Totnes, who are captained by his dad in Devon's B & C divisions, he moved up four levels to play in the county's Premier League for Torquay CC this year.

Spotted by Hampshire's director of cricket, Giles White, during one of his first games for Devon in the Minor Counties Championship at Finchampstead, he has not looked back since asked to trial at the Ageas Bowl.

Several promising Second Eleven performances later, he said: "It's been quite a whirlwind - it's my first year at Torquay and now I've got a contract at Hampshire!

"I always used to play cricket, then took up golf at 14/15 and focused on that. I got down to a one handicap but haven't played for quite a while.

"I went to America to play golf and study but it wasn't for me."



Ryan Stevenson in action

Stevenson, who describes himself as a bowling all-rounder, was working in his mum's Post Office and running the camping business he has set up with his girlfriend on his dad's chicken farm when he was not playing for Torquay and Devon.

"She's doing all the hard work while I'm playing for Hampshire!" laughed the 23 year-old, who is staying at the ground's Hilton Hotel during the week but still playing for Torquay at weekends.

"I've always followed county cricket on TV so it's been a brilliant experience.

"Shaun Pollock was always my cricket hero growing up so as a ten year-old I made sure I got his autograph when he visited Taunton with Warwickshire!"

Stevenson has impressed Hampshire with his pace and clean hitting and may well be back at the Ageas Bowl for coaching this winter.

He said: "Second XI cricket is a step up [from the Devon Premier League]. Batsmen are more capable lower down, but I'm doing my best and working at my game all the time."



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LOCAL CRICKET



South Wilts CC: Standing (from left): Rob Pittman, Dom Ducillier, Steve Warner, Luke Evans, Jake Foley, Joe Cranch. Front: Ryan Duffield, Eddie Abel, Tom Morton, James Hayward, Jack Mynott.

HAVANT and South Wilts have long since dominated Southern Electric Premier League cricket, so it's appropriate they should meet in Tuesday evening's Southern Electric T20 Cup final under the Ageas Bowl floodlights, 7pm.

Havant were last at the Ageas Bowl for the thrilling 2012 final against Bashley (Rydal) which ended in a tie and was decided in the Super Over.

South Wilts, meanwhile, go for a hat-trick of T20 titles, having thrashed both Burridge and Lymington in their last two final appearances.

It will be the fourth time the sides have met this season – South Wilts enjoying two overwhelming Premier Division wins and Havant winning a Royal London 45-over Cup tie at Bemerton last month.

South Wilts openers Tom Morton and James Hayward have dominated recent Ageas Bowl finals, but Havant have their own match winners in Rob Gibson, Richard Hindley and Ben Walker.

Andrews wins July accolade

TOM Andrews returned to Adelaide with the Southern Electric Cricketer of the Month award for July safety stored in his luggage.

The highly rated South Australia left-arm spin all-rounder flew home as the league's leading wicket taker with 44 Premier Division scalps, 18 of which came in July.

A left-handed batsman, Andrews also scored 151 runs.

Basingstoke & North Hants all-rounder Mitchell Stokes, the one-time Hampshire T20 opener, won the Premier 1 prize, with 241 runs and six wickets.

Sparsholt's Stuart Tognarelli (238 runs) and Trojans teenager Jordan Wright, with a 12-wicket return, were the Division Two and Three winners, respectively.



Tom Andrews

Ventnor in t20 final

VENTNOR and Waterlooville contest the second T20 Plate final at Totton & Eling tomorrow (3pm) knowing they may be hard pressed to repeat the wonderful excitement provided by New Milton, who beat the Eels in a Super Over after the final had ended in a tie.

Knocked out of the Southern Electric twenty20 Cup by Basingstoke & North Hants after a first round thriller, Ventnor beat Portsmouth easily but then needed an explosive pre-tea assault (50-plus runs came off the last two overs) to get them home in the semi-final against the Eels.

The Ville, just back from their west country tour, have scalped both Premier Division Alton and SPL1 side Bournemouth in the Plate and will relish their role as underdogs against Ventnor.

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

OFFICIALS of Dorset are weighing up the possibility of staging home matches outside the county for the first time in the club's 119-year history, with Bashley (Rydal) a prospective venue.

Dorset are looking for an alternative venue as the pavilion and changing rooms at Dean Park – their current headquarters – may not be available next season, *writes Mike Vimpany.*

Park School, which last year took a license for use of the site and facilities, is in the process of applying for planning consent for change of use at the venue.

As a result, Dorset are preparing for their final three-day game of the season against Berkshire, which starts tomorrow to be the last Minor Counties Championship match staged at Dean Park.

Former captain and current Dorset CCC committee member Sean Walbridge confirmed club officials had already visited prospective new venues – with one in Hampshire and another in Somerset.

Bashley (Rydal) and North Perrott in far off Crewkerne are both under consideration together with Bournemouth's ground at Chapel Gate, Sherborne School, Weymouth and Dorchester.

It is understood the proposed changes, which have not yet been finalised by Park School, will not affect recreational, age-group or schools cricket being played at Dean Park.

Walbridge, who now acts as Dorset team coordinator, explained: "Our understanding is that the pavilion will not be available to us next year and, therefore, we won't be able to use the ground to stage Minor Counties matches. Our final game of the season tomorrow is probably going to be the last one there."

Dean Park, which has hosted 343 first-class matches and was used by



Bashley CC could be a new venue for Dorset's Minor County Championship matches

Hampshire until 1992, is one of 17 grounds used by Dorset since the club was founded in 1896.

Park School owner Murray Smith said he hoped Dorset would continue to use the ground next year but added: "We don't know what we are planning to do with the pavilion but, at some stage, it is going to have to start washing its face."

"It is a listed building and it needs to generate funds in order to protect itself for it to be taken forward into the future. Cricket alone doesn't produce enough funds."

The Dorset Cricket Board is considering applying for funding from Sport England to convert a building adjacent to the existing pavilion into a temporary one.

County development manager

Keith Brewer said: "We feel it's very important to continue to play at Dean Park because it gives everyone a great experience of the sport."

"We will explore every avenue as long as it is not financially crippling to the rest of cricket in the county."

"I know the school understands we are not massively funded but we do our best to work together. I would like to stress that the school has been very helpful."

1 Long-serving David Lloyd has quit as captain of Premier Division One side Rowledge after seven years in the job.

The all-rounder, an influential figure at Rowledge, has handed over the reins to vice-captain Ben Wish.

With 24 victims pouched so far,

Wish is on course to emulate his SPL wicket-keeping award winning success of 2014.

1 Parley and South Wilts were gallant losers in this week's ECB Under-13 and Under-15 Club Championship finals.

Picked against Barnt Green, Eastcote, Grange and Guildford, Parley were unable to win any of their U13 matches at Oundle.

South Wilts bowed out to Himley, the eventual national champions, at Under-15 level, the Worcestershire side posting 125 to win by 55 runs.

Miles Kantolinna made 57 as South Wilts made 136-3 in the third-place play-off after Sutton had scored 168-3.

LOCAL CRICKET



OTs & Romsey II. Back (from left): Matt Bampton, Shane Vidler, Paul Longland, Richard Lake, Joe Welch, Steve Kay. Front: Max Smith, Colin Morris, Mike Trodd, Nick DeStefano, Jason Dodd.

HELMET PENALTY COSTLY

If OLD Tauntonians & Romsey seconds don't win promotion from County Division 1 – and it looks as though they'll be among the bridesmaids – they may reflect on the moment the ball struck wicketkeeper Colin Morris's helmet early in the defeat by Ryde.

Few probably thought much of it when umpire Tony Forward signalled five penalty runs early in the third over when Morris let a delivery by Joe Welch slip through his legs and on to the lid behind him, writes Mike Vimpany.

But when OTs finished two runs short chasing down Ryde's 270, it probably meant the difference in playing Premier Division 3 cricket next summer as opposed to the Hampshire League.

The narrow win put Ryde in prime position for promotion as potential runners-up behind Fair Oak, whose own hopes of a return to the Southern Premier will hinge with the Hampshire Cricket Board's accreditation assessment of Lapstone Park announced in the autumn.

Ryde's score owed much to left-hand opener Ben Wadmore (62), who feasted on some tasty morsels on his legs, Lawrence Tolfrey (40), Cameron Mitchell (42), Sam Rockley (39) and Stuart Robertson, who made a quick-fire 41 before tea.

Fuelled by Shane Vidler (78), OTs gave chase with Morris (48) back in the limelight as the Romsey hosts looked certain winners, needing eight runs to win off two overs, with



Peter Hammond, pictured bowling, top scored for Sarisbury II with 80 against Portchester in County One

three wickets left. Cue panic!

Tolfrey (5-35) produced a double-wicket maiden and then Wadmore struck in the final over to leave OTs 268 all out – and Ryde with a significant points advantage going into the last three games.

Ryde's prospects of winning the silver salver – presented by the HCL to the County Division 1 runners-

up – were boosted when Shrewton crashed to a 20-run defeat at relegation fighters Locks Heath, who defended a modest 132.

Jack Paskins (4-30), and three-wicket pair Moshin Sabri and Jack Levy did the damage.

But with Ropley (277-5) winning by 17 runs at Burridge II, Locks Heath took on Hayling Island today still in

the bottom three alongside Ventnor II, who pitched up with nine men at St Cross Symondians and were well beaten.

The side who could be in trouble are Portchester, who were rolled out for 98 and thumped by 156 runs by Sarisbury Athletic II (254), for whom Peter Hammond (80), pictured, top scored.

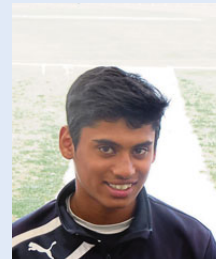
Euro trek no match for Elijah

AN arduous eight-hour coach trip from Switzerland, a cross-Channel ferry crossing from Calais to Dover and a split train journey to Southend-on-Sea was hardly the best preparation for a national youth championship semi-final the next day.

But 16-year Elijah Samuel, pictured, took it all in his stride to top score as Hampshire beat their Essex counterparts and earn a place in next Thursday's ECB Under-17 County Championship final at Arundel.

The wristy Marlborough College opener said: "The family had already booked a holiday in Interlaken, but I was desperate to play so had to make some pretty hasty arrangements to get from Switzerland to Southend."

"It meant sitting eight-hours in a crammed coach to get back to Calais, where we met with a rail strike and delays. "When I eventually got back to the UK, I had to catch the



Eurostar to Statford International and then to West Ham and board an all-station stopper to Southend-on-Sea.

"I was on the road from 8 o'clock in the morning until late at night, but everything went smoothly until my lift in Southend got lost and I didn't get to the hotel until gone midnight!"

After Hampshire dismissed Essex for 261, Samuel, a first-year Hampshire Academy scholar helped Ben Duggan negotiate a difficult last hour to help his side close day one on 33-0.

He lost Duggan (29) the next morning, but made 42 and enjoyed a fruitful partnership with Felix Organ (33) as Hampshire put 107-2 on the board by lunch.

Play was abandoned after 38 overs following a thunderstorm but Hampshire were well ahead on run rate by then.

Samuel wasn't the only Hampshire player to produce the goods after a spot of travelling. Charlie Gwynne flew to Southend from a surfing holiday in Newquay in time to return 4-52 with his left-arm spin!

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Steve Smith to captain the Test and ODI sides



Australia batsman Steve Smith has been chosen to succeed Michael Clarke as captain of his country's Test side. Clarke will retire at the end of the current Ashes series, which is due to conclude with next week's fifth and final Test, at The Oval. David Warner will take over as Australia's vice-captain.

Aussies name new skipper

Steve Smith will take over as Australia's Test captain following the imminent retirement of Michael Clarke.

Clarke is stepping down and retiring from international cricket at the end of the current Ashes series in England.

Cricket Australia has also confirmed David Warner will serve as vice-captain.

The announcement comes after Smith, 26, was also named as skipper for the upcoming one-day internationals in Ireland and England.

Smith, one of the world's leading batsmen, will also captain the Twenty20 side in the absence of the injured Aaron Finch.

Smith's appointment had been widely expected with the New South Wales player having previously deputised for Clarke in three Test matches.

National selector Rod Marsh said: "We have had a clear succession plan in place for the captaincy with Steve Smith gaining valuable experience leading the Australian Test team while Michael Clarke was recovering from injury last season."

"When Michael made his decision to retire last week it was a very straightforward decision for us to nominate Steve as his successor."

"He has big shoes to fill but everything about him suggests he is the right man for the job. At 26, he is a fine young man with extraordinary talent, excellent leadership qualities and a terrific temperament."

"He is highly regarded by the se-



A dejected Australia captain Michael Clarke (left) looks on with Steve Smith after a dropped catch off Alastair Cook.

lectors and we congratulate him on being appointed to the role on an ongoing basis. He should be incredibly proud."

Clarke announced his retirement last week after Australia were condemned to defeat in the Ashes series by losing the fourth Test at Trent Bridge. England have an unassail-

able 3-1 lead heading into the final match at The Oval, which starts next Thursday.

Smith's time in charge of the team will therefore effectively begin with the one-day international against Ireland in Belfast on August 27. A T20 international and five more ODIs against England follow.

Smith wrote on Twitter: "It's an honour and privilege to be given the opportunity to Captain the Australian Cricket Team. I'm really excited about what lies ahead. We really want to send @MClarke23 out on a winning note this week. He's had a magnificent career and is a true great of Australian cricket."

Jos wants historic fourth win

ENGLAND have answered Alastair Cook's calls to make Ashes history this summer – and Jos Buttler is confident they have it in them to do so again at The Oval.

No England team has won four Ashes Tests on home soil since the battle for the urn began more than 130 years ago – although the 2013 series was a photo finish in fading light as Cook's team had to settle for a 3-0 verdict.

Buttler is determined to help repay Cook's faith in England's collective capabilities one more time by making it 4-1 in the final Test.

At Trent Bridge last week, Stuart Broad's brilliant bowling – and Joe Root's continued form with the bat – dismantled the tourists as England regained the Ashes with an unassailable lead.

Buttler, an ever-present in the series, wants to be on the highlights reel too.

"The two guys – Joe getting a hundred and Stuart taking eight for 15 – that's as good as you can get when your captain asks you to stand up," he said.

"You watch great series on the TV – 'Sky Sports Classics' – (and) in 20 years it will probably be that Broad spell that people talk about."

England's wicketkeeper-batsman can already reflect on a summer to remember, but knows there is unfinished business – and a chance to make sure he is one of the household names for generations to come.

"The opportunity to win four matches could make this series one of the most memorable," he said. "It's been a fantastic few weeks, and very surreal to have won the Ashes."

"You're pinching yourself to be part of it. Then to win it... is something you'll remember for the rest of your life."

"It's been really great to see the crowd's reaction to winning games, you really feel that sense of the country being on your side."

"There was always an underlying belief in the side that it could be done. It's been a rollercoaster series, some great performances from individuals – it seems to have had it all."



England's Jos Buttler



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